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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Theatre Discipline to Close Season with *Pinocchio Commedia*

Summary: Morris students collaborate to produce an adaption of a beloved classic.

MORRIS, Minnesota (April 6, 2016)—The University of Minnesota, Morris Theatre Discipline will close its 2015-2016 season with a unique spin on a children’s classic, *Pinocchio Commedia*, a *commedia dell’arte* adaptation of Carlo Collodi’s *Pinocchio* by Johnny Simons. Directed by Jonas Newhouse ’16, this production demonstrates the power of theatre in reaching and connecting with people, particularly young audience members. *Pinocchio Commedia* will be performed in the HFA Raymond J. Lammers Proscenium Theatre April 13-20, 2016.

“We are creating a final product that will feature physical comedy, character-audience relationships, and live music in the hopes that we can tell two stories: one of a young boy shaped by experience and learning what it means to live, and the other of an intentional family expressing themselves and fostering human connection through the art of the theatre,” states Newhouse.

The play begins with the boisterous entrance of a traveling troupe of players who quickly assume the roles of various characters in the familiar *Pinocchio* story. Amusement and mayhem ensue when the wooden puppet Pinocchio is given the chance to live life as a real boy, so long as he listens to his creator and father Geppetto. While this task seems simple at first, it becomes much more challenging as Pinocchio faces pressure from his peers and encounters some of the dangers that the real world can hold. This adaptation features stock characters, simple props and staging, masks, and original live music to tell the story.

Members of the cast include Mickey Capps ‘18, Alex Schotzko ‘19, Nick Honer ‘17, Katie Rowles-Perich ‘18, William White ‘16, Sydney Long ‘16, Brennan Bassett ‘17, Zack Swigerd ‘19, and Megan Hassing ‘19. This production also features a live band; the performers include William Bauer ‘18, Joseph Fontaine ‘19, and Thomas Peterson ‘18.

Faculty and staff crew members include Assistant Professor of Theatre Craig Moxon, scenic designer, Carrie Hurst, scene shop supervisor, Liz Spohr, costume and publicity supervisor. Student crew members include Sally Bremer ‘18, stage manager, Heather Wolf ‘19, assistant stage manager, Emmet Kowler ‘16, lighting designer, William Bauer ‘18, sound designer, Joseph Fontaine ‘19, sound designer, Rose Peterson ‘17, costume designer, Megan Maynard ‘17, assistant costume designer, Justin Anderson ‘18, props designer, and Laura Steblay ‘19, dramaturg.

Pinocchio Commedia will be performed Friday, April 15, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, April 16, at 1 p.m. with additional performances for elementary schools from April 13th-15th and April 18th-20th in the HFA Raymond J. Lammers Proscenium Theatre. Tickets—\$4 for general admission—are available at the door. For additional information call 320-589-6274.

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